

Record

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WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

Patterson Place underway

KKK can't stop ministry

IMB taps Mississippian

Letters to the Editor

Roy Blunt: 'A great time to be in Congress'

By Tim Palmer
Missouri Word and Way

WASHINGTON (BP) — Roy Blunt views serving in the United States House of Representatives from a historian's perspective — which isn't surprising since he has two degrees in history and has taught the subject to high school and college students.

"This is a great time to be in Congress," Blunt said recently in Washington. "In our country, about once in every generation we really take time to redefine what we want government to be. We're doing that now."

"So we debate bigger issues and make longer-range decisions." The last such period in American history was the mid-1960s, Blunt said, when Lyndon Johnson was pushing his vision of a "Great Society."

Blunt was elected to Congress in November 1996 and took office in January 1997. He said serving in the House has required him to make adjustments from his two previous posts — president of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Missouri's secretary of state.

The decision-making process is different, and he must follow a schedule over which he has little control. "Then to become one vote out of 435 is certainly a change."

Blunt pointed out he never served in the Missouri legislature and he acknowledged some frustration over being one part in a large body as opposed to being a "CEO" (chief executive officer), but this does have some advantages.

"For the first time, 217 others also have to make a bad decision for something really bad to happen."

Being a freshman in Congress

has been better than he expected, Blunt said. He was the only first-term member chosen to serve on the House leadership's steering committee, which determines committee appointments.

Besides getting appointed to three influential committees himself — international relations, transportation and infrastructure, and agriculture — he got to know many of the movers and shakers in the House.

Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas), the House majority whip, then appointed Blunt an assistant whip. The whips' job is to monitor the progress of legislation.

Blunt acknowledged being "in awe" of some of the decisions Congress is called upon to make, "and I think (a congressman) should be."

He said he has been surprised by the number of opportunities for Christians in Congress to strengthen their faith, and by the number of people willing to do that. About 50 members typically attend a weekly House prayer breakfast, and a dozen or so gather for a Thursday afternoon Bible study.

With still more lawmakers participating in a weekly luncheon for freshmen hosted by the Christian Foundation, Blunt estimated that a typical week will see 100 of the 435 House members taking part in one or more of these events.

He pointed out Congress is and should be a reflection of the country. Thus its current membership reflects America's desire to get back to "things that work" — faith and faith-based organizations.

The most important thing that happened in the nation's capital last year was not a government action, Blunt remarked, but the October Promise Keepers rally, where hundreds of thousands of men

gathered to affirm their faith and their commitment to Christian values.

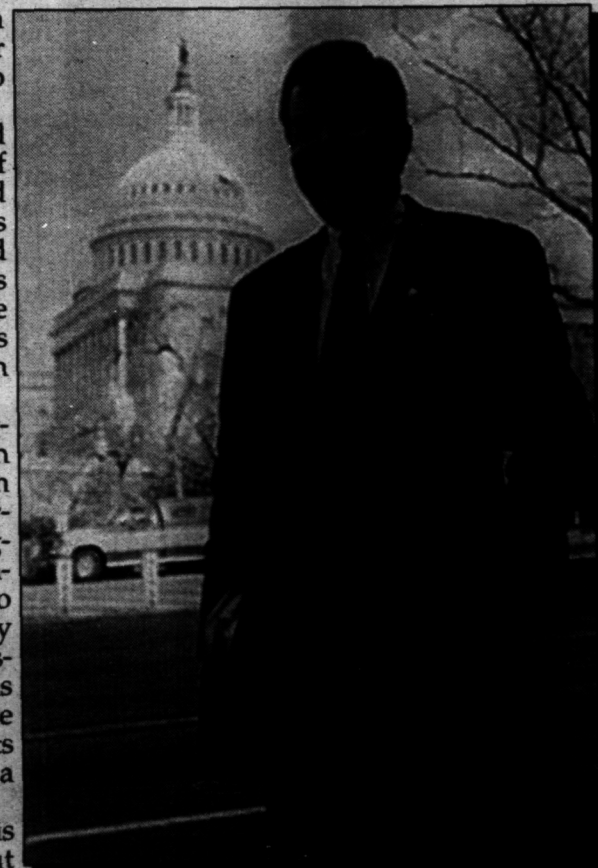
Blunt also noted the influence of values-oriented thinkers such as Charles Colson and Chuck Swindoll is being felt in the nation's business community and in government.

"Something bigger is happening in America than would ever generate out of Washington," he said. Congress is beginning to acknowledge family values by addressing issues such as the "marriage penalty" that puts married couples at a disadvantage.

Serious debate is under way about allowing faith-based organizations to participate in offering social services, such as drug rehabilitation. "I think it's a good idea," Blunt said.

Despite his overall optimistic outlook, Blunt is not enthusiastic about everything he sees. "A lot of folks in Washington do take themselves too seriously," he said.

As for the current situation in the Clinton administration, Blunt said, "I think Americans right now are trying to give the president the benefit of the doubt." He termed the recent



Roy Blunt in Washington

sex scandals involving Clinton and sportscaster Marv Albert, "embarrassing for the country when kids watch the news."

His frequent trips to Missouri, where he and his wife, Roseanne, spend most weekends on their farm in Strafford, help keep him in touch with what's most important. "The strength of the country comes from the country — not from Washington."

The Blunts are members of Second Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo. They have three grown children.

Looking back

10 years ago

The Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) 109th annual meeting at Colonial Heights Church, Jackson, marks the WMU centennial celebration. Theme interpretations were given by retired executive secretary-treasurer, Edwina Robinson.

25 years ago

Paul D. Thompson of Louisville receives the Good Shepherd award for distinguished service to the Boy Scouts organization. Only 50 of these awards to Baptist scout leaders are given nationally each year. This was the second one awarded to a Mississippian.

50 years ago

Douglas MacArthur, Allied supreme commander in Japan, reiterated his contention that the solution to Japanese problems "largely rests upon the spiritual reformation of the Japanese people." He expressed belief that Christian influences "rapidly are bearing fruit."

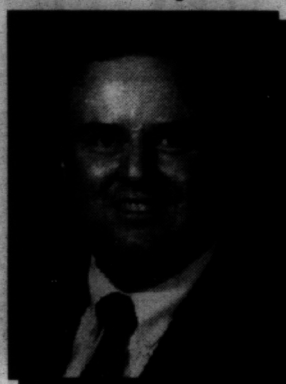
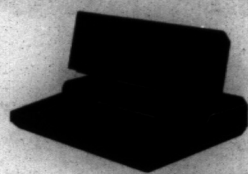
Musicians sought for BWC

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Church choirs, vocal ensembles, instrumental groups, and soloists from the United States and Canada are needed to fill volunteer musical roles related to the 18th Baptist World Congress (BWC), Jan. 5-9, 2000, in Melbourne, Australia. Theme for the congress is "Jesus Christ Forever, Yes!"

Mark Blankenship, director of the Sunday School Board's music ministries department, will coordinate music volunteers from North America for plenary sessions, Bible study groups, missions outreach and local Melbourne Baptist churches.

Participating groups will be responsible for their own expenses. Written expressions of interest may be sent to Blankenship at 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, TN 37234-0171, or by e-mail: mark.blankenship@bssb.com.

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An easily avoided church tragedy

Look up 'pastor' in the dictionary, and you'll find a picture of ours alongside the definition," the Sunday School director proudly reported — and he wasn't boasting, according to most of the other church members.

Descriptions like "outstanding preacher," and "shepherd of his flock," were used weekly to describe his life and ministry. A crusader for world missions with a passion for local evangelism, he was a respected community leader who exploited his high visibility to draw people to the Lord.

Things could not be going any better for the church: a stable congregation, burgeoning Sunday School and discipleship classes, and respect in the community — due largely to the presence of a strong, God-called pastor with a clear vision of his roles as minister, husband, father, and community leader.

No one knew how long he had been unconscious when the church secretary found him slumped over his desk. The stroke was massive, the doctors said, and there was no way to predict how long he would be in the coma.

At the hospital, the deacon chairman promised the pastor's devastated wife that he would receive the best medical care and all the rehabilitation services he would need, for as long as he needed them.

It was only a short time later that those church leaders dis-

covered, to their surprise and horror, that virtually no such provisions had been made by the church for the pastor and his family. There was no medical insurance to pay the growing hospital bills, and the lack of coverage meant there would also be no way to pay for long term care and rehabilitation services when the time came.

As their pastor sunk ever deeper into the coma, church leaders also realized there was no disability insurance to provide for his family.

The church got by with supply preaching and interim pastors, but attendance began to slough off. The absence of a full-time pastor was beginning to have its effect. The congregation was restive.

Then the pastor died, and compounding that tragedy was the too-late realization that no life insurance had been provided for the pastor — the sole support for his family. The congregation voted to allow the family to remain in the parsonage while the search for a new pastor was ongoing.

However, when the time came to call the new pastor there was still no place for the former pastor's family to go, so the church was forced to rent a home for the new pastor.

Because the church was so heavily invested in the former pastor's family, they could not provide benefits for the new pastor. The tragic cycle began anew.

The strain of supporting two families began to take its toll on the church budget — and on the church body. Despite the new pastor's best efforts, attendance continued to drop as dissension

began to brew. The downward spiral picked up speed, and before long this once thriving, evangelistic body of believers was spent.

Such church tragedies are relatively easy to avoid. Southern Baptists saw fit many years ago to provide a system for the people who answer God's call and follow his will at great personal sacrifice — and God has richly blessed the growth of that system so his people can be supported in these special ways.

The Southern Baptist Annuity Board, headquartered in Dallas and managed by people with a solid commitment to providing for the earthly needs of God's ministers, has programs to fit the needs of churches of virtually any size. They want to help.

The Annuity Board has made it as easy as possible to find out about its programs by stationing a representative in cooperation with the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, to help churches understand all the programs that are available.

Tragedies in the life of a church will occur, but surely it saddens our Heavenly Father to

"DEACON JONES SAYS HE WANTS TO SEE THE HOSS — BE CAREFUL, PASTOR — HE'S WEARING SPURS!"



encounter tragedies in his church that are so easily avoidable.

If you're a church leader, it's your responsibility to find out what your church can do to avoid such tragedy. Do it now. Your church, your pastor — and your Savior — are depending on you.

Southern Baptist Annuity Board

Robin D. Nichols
Mississippi Representative

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Southern Baptists have been traveling through troubled waters for some time.

In 1995 the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board released a study that ought to lead us to examine our practice of baptism. Records were taken from the previous years (1992-93) where 1,550 adults (18 and older) who had been baptized in Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) were surveyed. The newly baptized participants in the survey were asked why they had been baptized.

Less than half (40.5%) surveyed said that they had been baptized because they had been converted. "Rededication" was the answer selected by 40.4% of the respondents.

If this survey represented the 150,000 adults baptized in that period, only 60,000 baptisms represented real conversions of the lost. Something is wrong.

These figures are more alarming when you consider that only adults were polled. When you take into consideration that figures for the same years include more than 3,000 baptized who were five years old or younger, the news is even more disturbing.

Add to these figures the fact that the 840 churches in the survey admitted to losing contact with more than one-third of those whom they had baptized, and one has to ask: Are we just out for numbers or just crazy?

Baptism dramatically portrays the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

GUEST OPINION:

Padding rolls, losing souls?

By Cary F. Worthington, pastor
West Laurel Church, Laurel



"EVANGELISM? NO, WE'RE JUST INTERESTED IN BAPTISMS! THAT'S ALL THEY TOLD US TO COUNT. WHAT IS THIS EVANGELISM STUFF?"



Three ingredients are essential for this to be true: (1) The right mode — plunging beneath the water, (2) The right candidate — a previously unbaptized believer in Jesus Christ and, (3) The right meaning — it is a testimony of faith, symbolizing the believer's participation in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

My heart breaks when I think of the confusion and disillusionment of those who have been mistakenly baptized and for those who witness any baptism other than Believer's Baptism.

It is tragic that in our quest to pad our numbers we have so cheapened its meaning. How ironic that some modern Baptists seem all too willing to give up this distinction that our forefathers wouldn't give up despite the threat of fire and sword.

The greatest need in the SBC today is a renewal of theological study. We are fast heading to a point where manipulation is replacing trust in the sovereignty of God.

I pray every pastor would be moved to deal honestly, faithfully, and scripturally with all who are entrusted to our care.

Let us give a clear call instead of troubling the waters with improper candidates.

Touch not the Glory! The end never justifies the means!

For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? (1 Cor.14:8).

Groundbreaking held for Garaywa's adult lodge

By William H. Perkins Jr.
Editor

Under thunderous skies and a soaking downpour, ground was broken March 5 for the new \$1.5 million adult lodge at Camp Garaywa, the state Girls in Action campground in Clinton.

"The dream is becoming a reality," said Marjean Patterson, executive director of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and namesake of the new facility that will be known as Patterson Place. WMU officials in 1996 unveiled plans for the adult

lodge to facilitate the growing number of meetings and conferences being held at the centrally-located campground.

Camp Garaywa currently has multiple cabin-type housing with shared baths connected by sidewalks, which was deemed less than suitable for adult meetings requiring overnight accommodations.

Howell W. Todd, president of Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton, reminded the 200 in attendance that Baptists are missions-minded people, and he described the lodge as a "wonderful testimony" to WMU's efforts to help win Mississippi and the world to Jesus.

Clinton Mayor Rosemary Aultman, a member of First Church, Clinton, applauded WMU on their plans to expand the ministry of the popular camp.

"We are so happy that this dream of yours is about to come to fruition, because we know lives are changed here," Aultman said.

Cindy Coon, a former Mississippi WMU staffer and

member of Alta Woods Church, Jackson, provided special music. A "trialogue" that detailed the history of the lodge was presented by Betty Malone of Jackson, chair of the lodge advance gifts committee; Sandra Nash of Clinton, immediate past president of Mississippi WMU and chair of the lodge WMU commitment committee; and John McCall of Clinton, chair of the lodge friends of missions committee.

For more information on how to become involved in the construction and furnishing of Patterson Place, contact Mississippi WMU at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free (800) 748-1651.



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE



HISTORY LESSON — Participating in a "trialogue" tracing the history of Patterson Place during March 5 groundbreaking ceremonies at Camp Garaywa in Clinton were (from left) Betty Malone, Sandra Nash, and John McCall (Photos by William H. Perkins Jr.).

Ex. Comm. okays three for MBCB posts

By Tim Nicholas
MBCB Communications Director

Tom Prather and Stan Stanford were elected to the staff of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) March 12 by the board's Executive Committee.

Prather, currently administrator at Woodland Hills Baptist Academy in Jackson, will begin April 1 in a new position. His title will be "Alert the World Coordinator," a position assigned directly to MBCB executive director, Bill Causey.

Prather's responsibilities will include:

- spiritual development among vocational groups such as coaches and attorneys.
- coordination with para-church groups such as Fellowship of Christian Athletes.
- enlisting a lay speaker's bureau to spread the message of Mississippi Baptists.

Causey told executive committee members that he likens Prather's job to enlistment of "a thousand men on a thousand hills helping win people to Christ."

He said Prather might, for instance, enlist Christian coaches around the state to hold summer camps for kids. The camps would offer athletic training and a Christian witness, which student participants could then take back to their respective schools in the fall.

Funding for the new position will come from interest earnings rather than direct Cooperative Program funds, Causey said.

Prather, an ordained minister, has directed the private Jackson academy since last May. Prior to that, he was minister of education and administration at Woodland Hills Church, Jackson, from 1995-1997.

He held several positions at Mississippi College in Clinton from 1985-1995, including assistant to the president, director of financial aid, and liaison to Clarke College.

Prather has also served as dean of men at Clarke College in Newton and as minister of

activities/youth at Woodland Hills Church.

He has also been a teacher and coach at Clinton Junior High School and Hillcrest Christian School, Jackson.

Prather, age 48 and a native of Baldwyn, is a graduate of Mississippi College where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master of education degree. He also holds a Ph.D. degree in administration from the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

Prather and his wife Vicki, have three children.

Stan Stanford, 26, joins the board staff as food/guest services coordinator for Camp Garaywa in Clinton, the state Girls in Action (GA) campground. He will supervise all food services and camp maintenance campground, which is developing a new program that will include facilities for adult meetings.

Stanford is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg with a degree in hotel/restaurant administration. He also earned a master of religious education degree from New Orleans Seminary in New Orleans.

Stanford goes to Garaywa from Heafner Tires and Products in Jackson, where he sold to retailers from 1996-98. Earlier jobs included sales positions in the tire and auto industries and in motel guest services.

From 1989-1991, he was church activities minister at First Church, Yazoo City. A native of Yazoo City, Stanford and his wife Sheila, have one son.

Anita Malley, formerly GA consultant in the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union, has been reassigned to become manager of Camp Garaywa. Malley and Stanford replace Bob Dent, who recently resigned to assume a managerial job for a Baptist camp near Baytown, Tex.

The executive committee approved for convention board membership Donnie L. Stewart, pastor of Sylva Rena in Yalobusha Association, to replace Troy Hurdle, pastor

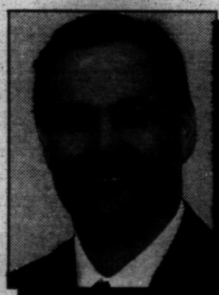
of Camp Ground Church, Yalobusha Association, who resigned from the convention board in December.

Johnny Walker, pastor of First Church, Winona, was chosen to replace Dan Robertson as vice chair of the executive committee. Robertson recently resigned the pastorate of West Heights Church, Pontotoc, in view of a call to become pastor of First Church, Natchez, vacating his position as Pontotoc Association representative on the convention board.

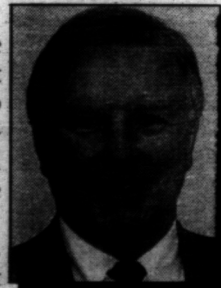
A new Pontotoc Association representative will be nominated by the association in the near future and submitted to the executive committee for election.



Malley



Stanford



Prather

Garaywa groundbreaking



Baptists from across Mississippi braved heavy thunderstorms to break ground for Patterson Place, the new adult lodge at Camp Garaywa in Clinton. The \$1.5 million facility is designed to improve accommodations for the rising number of adult meetings held at the centrally-located campground. Please see related article on this page. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

Performing arts festival set for March 27-28

A Christian performing arts festival will take place March 27-28 at First Church, Richland, featuring training and performing opportunities for church drama, puppetry, and clowning groups.

There will also be training in church recreation.

The festival, sponsored by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), is open to all denominations. The event will offer creative ways to present the gospel message of Jesus Christ.

Parallel to the festival will be a youth leader lab for ministers of youth. Featured speaker is Barry St. Clair of Reach Out Ministries in Norcross, Ga.

Cost of the festival is \$20 per person, which includes breakfast and lunch.

For more information, contact Wes Pegues in the MBCB Discipleship and Family Ministry Department at (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

KKK tensions don't disrupt church's focus

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — Tension gripped the city of Memphis on a recent Saturday as violence erupted during a downtown demonstration by the Ku Klux Klan.

Some people received minor injuries and windows were broken during what began as a peaceful counter-demonstration. Several hundred people braved winter cold to voice their opposition to the white supremacist group. Sadly, there were some in the crowd bent on violence, which resulted in several arrests and the use of tear gas.

For the casual observer, the next morning proved a stark contrast as Brinkley Heights Church met for worship. In a city too often marred by racial strife, this congregation of 70 worshippers is nearly equally divided between white and black.

The church, located in a low-income neighborhood, has no time for ethnic struggles. As one member shared, "No one here even thinks about all that." Several months ago, their auditorium was condemned due to structural failure. The obvious dips in the roof reveal a building that has seen better days.

According to pastor Tim Cox, "The old building has got to go. Plans are being made for a new one. This is a new area of faith for us. We have always done ministry on whatever level God provided. Now we are having to plan and believe in advance for something as big as a new building."

Recent worship services were held in a

tent, but during the previous week's ice storm, the tent collapsed from the weight. The congregation crammed into a small basement in the part of the building which is still sound. The crowded conditions and collapsed tent had no dampening effect on the people's enthusiasm as they worshipped Christ, clapped, sang, and prayed together.

It is from this same basement that the church distributed emergency food aid to more than 7,100 people during 1997, which equated to 64,000-plus meals.

Volunteers gather weekly to sort clothing, assist with food distribution, do blood pressure screenings, and offer spiritual counseling.

Besides feeding hungry bodies, the church seeks to feed the soul. More than 180 people prayed to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior last year.

Little discussion was given to the previous day's events in downtown Memphis during the Sunday worship service, but all heads — both black and white — nod in agreement, that the only answer to racial strife lies in a relationship with Jesus Christ.



CARING TOUCH — Volunteers at Brinkley Heights Church, Memphis, work each week sharing food, clothing, and medical aid (above), as well as the Good News of Jesus Christ. (BP photo)

IMB prayer list to exclude 'Last Frontier' workers

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Southern Baptist missionaries living and working with people in areas of the world that restrict the gospel will not be named in public prayer lists distributed through the denomination's information channels.

"It's a very dangerous world we live in," said Avery Willis, senior vice president for the International Mission Board (IMB) overseas operations. "We need to pray for these people, but just to give their names might endanger them or, at least, cause them to lose access to the people they work with."

IMB officials fear not only for missionaries and their families, but even more for believers whom missionaries reach and disciple. "From the standpoint of people who might not be Christian or might be anti-Christian, if someone knows you are a missionary, they might persecute the national believer," Willis said.

Missionaries appointed to help lead ethnic people groups in "The Last Frontier" to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ were informed in February of the decision to withhold their names from birthday prayer lists sent for publication through the Baptist Sunday School Board, Woman's Missionary Union, and North American Mission Board.

The Last Frontier is the collection of

people groups that have been kept from hearing about Jesus Christ, often by governments or traditional religions.

To prevent loss of life or access, the board has labeled each missionary according to the level of security under which each one must operate.

Through the years, countless missionaries have documented miraculous moves of God that occurred on their birthdays, when people throughout the world were praying for them.

"Recognizing that this is a great loss to missionaries in these categories, we will suggest that these publications ask their readers to pray, at least, for 'Last Frontier' missionaries," a notice to missionaries said.

Those who pray need to spend more time on this group because the term "Last Frontier missionaries" could represent 5-10 people a day, Willis said.

People who want to pray specifically for Last Frontier activity can access the CompassionNet prayer network through a link on the board's Internet page (www.imb.org).

They also may e-mail web-servant@imb.org and ask for an automatic e-mail of the daily "Today's Prayer" listing of concerns from throughout the world. Last Frontier needs are detailed on CompassionNet and Today's Prayer as they come up.

Southern Baptists also should pray in general for Last Frontier missionaries every day, said Randy Sprinkle, who leads prayer strategy for IMB.

"These missionaries live in

sensitive, volatile places where often hatred and violence can explode around them or even against them without warning," he said.

"Ask God to cover them ... asking that he may hide them in the tabernacle of his presence and grant that they may speak the word with increased confidence in him and in its power to bring life."

Also, he said, pray:

- ♦ that as they are "children of the light" in a dark world, Last Frontier missionaries may be strengthened as by faith Jesus dwells in their inner person, and that they may reflect that light;

- ♦ that they may be reminded and, with deepening understanding, know the truth that all their adequacy stems from God;

- ♦ that God remove the blindness and deception that unbelievers might experience and that these missionaries would speak the word of life in the power of the Holy Spirit; and

- ♦ that they be covered with the full armor of God and continue until all people have heard and received the gospel.

Prayers for the Last Frontier should be voiced for believers, too: that they will be protected from physical harm and when they are persecuted the strength of their faith will give a positive witness, Willis said.

Also, prayers should ask God to break through barriers that impede the gospel.

IMB history goes 'electronic'

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Helen Falls wanted to be a missionary, but World War II prevented her service. On the same day she received a letter from the International Mission Board declining her application, she also got a letter from the Baptist State Convention of Maryland, which read, "In the event the overseas missions door closes to you, would you consider working the home field?"

She's been working the "home field" ever since.

Her latest venture? Using a tape recorder, and sometimes a magnifying glass, she read aloud 2,671 legal-size pages of the official minutes of the International Mission Board. From the gavel's first fall at the 1845 meeting, which established the Southern Baptist Convention and the International Mission Board, to the board's last trustee meeting of 1913, Falls worked almost 2,000 hours making tapes of the hand-written minutes for transcription.

Board minutes have been typed since 1914. IMB personnel have entered those minutes into the database.

The hard-working retiree worked four to five hours, one day a week for more than eight years on the project. "That's about as much time per day you can give a chore like this," she said. "Sometimes the handwriting looked like chickens had been walking around in mud."

Falls worked on the project because of her appreciation for missions history. But as a former seminary professor she also saw the importance of the minutes as an educational tool. Falls retired from New Orleans Seminary in 1982 after 37 years of service as professor of missions and dean of women.

The entire project was completed Feb. 6, said IMB archivist Edie Jeter. The minutes are now available on the Internet for a trial period, she added.

"This is a phenomenal resource for Southern Baptist missions professors and students almost beyond compare," said Keith Eitel, missions professor at Southeastern Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

That will make Falls happy, because it points to another reason she was involved in the project.

"So much of my background is missions, and I wanted to do something that will help others have an appreciation of Southern Baptist international missions," she said. "It's truly been a rewarding experience, and I believe I've made a lasting contribution to my own history and heritage."

People interested in the electronic minutes of the International Mission Board may access the information at <http://basisweb.imb.org:8080>.

Mississippian chosen to expand IMB system

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Veteran missions videographer Van Payne has been selected to direct a major expansion of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's overseas correspondent system.

A Mississippi native, Payne has produced missions video products at the board for 20 years. He has directed the IMB's audiovisual and electronic media efforts since 1989.

As director of the overseas correspondent system, Payne will oversee the creation of a global network of Southern Baptist writers, photographers and videographers.

The board's original overseas correspondent system established a network of four writers who provided on-site coverage of missions work

around the world. The writers were appointed as career missionaries and stationed in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas in the early 1980s.

The expanded system provides for 14 correspondents and adds photographers and videographers to the mix. While many correspondents will serve as career missionaries, positions also have been created for short-term journeymen and International Service Corps workers.

The expanded network will link Southern Baptists and God's worldwide activity of reaching a lost world with the gospel, Payne said.

"The expanded overseas correspondent system can help Southern Baptists understand how God is working in his

world, and what Southern Baptists can do and are doing to make his name known to the nations," he said.

"Our correspondents will give new insights into the lostness and darkness missionaries encounter as they preach and teach and minister in Christ's name around the world.

"Good journalists are just storytellers at heart, and the folks I'll be working with will be getting a chance to use their skills to cover some of the most meaningful stories in the world

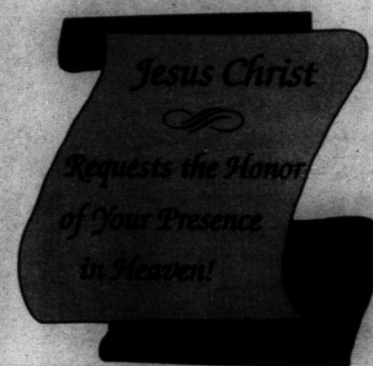
today, stories of how God's spirit is moving and how people are being brought to saving faith in Jesus Christ.

A 1973 graduate of William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Payne worked as a reporter and editor for a Biloxi television station before accepting a missionary journeyman assignment with a Southern Baptist communications center in Nairobi, Kenya, in 1975. He joined the staff of the International Mission Board in 1977.

He has produced documentary film and video programs in more than 60 countries. His work has been broadcast in more than a dozen countries and his documentary films on Christians in China and the USSR have been translated into 13 languages.



Payne



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1. Lord, I admit that I need you. *(I have sinned.)*
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. *(I repent.)*
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. *(I believe in Jesus.)*
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him. *(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)*

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Settlement reached in Louisiana College lawsuit

PINEVILLE, La. (BP) — After months of negotiation and extended deadlines, the lawsuit of four Louisiana College professors against the "conservative resurgence" group in the state has been settled.

The out-of-court settlement comes about 20 months after the suit was filed. In the suit, the four professors charged that letters distributed in 1995 by Leon Hyatt of Pineville and the Louisiana Baptists Speaking the Truth in Love group were defamatory and derogatory and meant to harm their professional and moral reputations.

The four professors are Carlton Winbery, Fred Downing, James Heath, and Connie Douglas.

The letters were part of an effort by the Louisiana Baptists Speaking the Truth in Love group to call Louisiana College and the state convention "back to its biblical and moral roots."

That group organized in May 1995 with adoption of a covenant document and four goals, two of which were directed at Louisiana College.

Almost immediately, the group began to distribute a packet of letters from people citing various concerns about what they had experienced at Louisiana College.

The letters cited a range of past incidents at the college and named several professors. Details about how to receive the packet were published in the Louisiana Baptists Speaking the Truth in Love newsletter.

Although the letters began to be distributed in the summer of 1995, it was not until June 1996 that the four Louisiana College professors filed suit against Hyatt and the group.

The professors said they filed the suit after months of unsuccessful efforts to resolve the issue through non-legal means.

Hyatt's attorney sought to have the suit dismissed on

church-state grounds, insisting the courts shouldn't get involved in an ecclesiastical matter.

However, an Alexandria judge declined that request, saying the case does not fall under the protection of the First Amendment.

That ruling was upheld by both a state appeals court and the state Supreme Court.

Those rulings cleared the way for a jury trial in the matter, and attorneys for the professors continued to conduct depositions of several people involved with the "conservative resurgence" group.

Soon after the Supreme Court ruling last spring, however, the possibility of an out-of-court settlement began to be discussed by Louisiana Baptist leaders.

According to released documents, attorneys for the professors were approached by attorneys for Hyatt and others about that possibility.

Late last summer, it appeared the issue would be settled by the time of the fall state convention.

Details could not be worked out, however. Later, it appeared matters would be resolved in the early days of 1998. Again, expectations went unmet.

Finally, an agreement was reached with settlement forms being signed by both sides of the issue in February.

Documents were delivered to the court in ensuing days to facilitate official settlement. Terms of the settlement include:

- payment of \$40,000 in attorney fees for the professors from a fund donated by Louisiana Baptist leaders for that purpose.

Payment of attorney fees for the defendants also was made from the fund, although a dollar amount is not listed in the settlement document.

• an apology letter from Hyatt to each of the professors. In the letter, Hyatt concludes:

"(I) acknowledge that my actions in the letter writing campaign on behalf of Louisiana Baptists: Speaking the Truth in Love caused you harm, and I sincerely apologize for the personal and professional hurt that you experienced."

• approval of a contract by Louisiana College trustees affirming the four professors for their past dedication and commitment to the college and assuring them no "adverse action" would be taken against them as a result of the lawsuit.

The contract stipulates such things as termination, suspension, reprimand, reduction of salary, and public criticism.

In the contract, the professors also offer a covenant pledge that their teaching will uphold and recognize the authority and divine inspiration of Scripture, will be tolerant of differing students' views and supportive of student needs in that area and will be

consistent with official college statements on teacher responsibility and academic freedom.

• release of the deposition of Rick Henson of Lecompte, who has served as editor of the Louisiana Baptists: Speaking the Truth in Love newsletter.

In the deposition, Henson said as editor of the newsletter he did not seek to verify the accuracy of the distributed letters or to contact the professors for their response to the comments made in the letters.

• release of Hyatt, the Louisiana Baptists: Speaking the Truth in Love group and any insurers of those from "any and all claims" in the suit.

Documents stipulate the settlement agreement "constitutes a complete compromise of a disputed claim and that the payments acknowledged herein are solely for the purpose of putting an end to litigation and is in no way an admission of liability by anyone."

'StarQuest' named top pick by magazine

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's Vacation Bible School (VBS) materials were recently named one of "Children's Ministry" magazine's "top picks for 1998."

The March/April '98 issue of the Group Publishing magazine included an article titled, "The VBS Winners' Circle," which featured reviews of the top four VBS kits for '98 as judges by a panel of four independent consultants. This first kit listed was "StarQuest: A Galactic Good News Adventure," produced by the Baptist Sunday School Board (BSSB).

"The space theme is a definite hit with today's space-age kids," the judges said, adding it was "beautifully interwoven" into every aspect of the materials.

The judges also cited the "strong salvation opportunities" in the Bible content of the

StarQuest materials, an "excellent director's planning guide," "colorful student books" and lessons that are "laid out clearly and simply with easy-to-follow instructions." They described the materials as being "filled with creative and multisensory activities such as games, experiments and even paper airplanes."

"We're thrilled about this recognition for our resources," said Rob Sanders, VBS specialist for the BSSB, "but we're even more excited that StarQuest can help children know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and to share that good news with others."

While the magazine judges VBS materials for children, StarQuest includes resources for all age groups — preschool, children, youth, and adults. There are also materials for persons with special education needs.

More information about StarQuest is available online at www.bssb.com/yourvbs.



JUST FOR THE RECORD



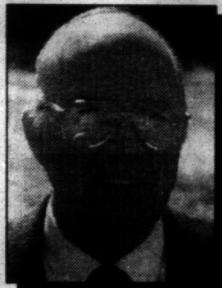
Ronny Robinson, executive director, Baptist Children's Village, recently preached at New Prospect Church, Iuka. The church gave over \$9,382 to the Children's Village in 1997. Proceeds from a cook book put together by the church went to the Children's Village. Pictured (from left) are Doug Christy, pastor; Deb Daniel, cook book editor; Robinson; and Ronny Stricklen, chairman of deacons.

Lottie Moon goal exceeded

Springdale Church, Ripley, exceeded its goal of \$4,100 for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. The church gave a final total of \$23,535.55.

William J. Murray, born-again Christian son of atheist Madelyn Murray O'Hair, will speak at Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, on March 22 at 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Murray accepted Christ at age 33 and now travels the world to warn others of the destructiveness of life without God. For more information, call (601) 287-2864 or (601) 287-2764.

Calvary Church, Waynesboro, will celebrate its 50th anniversary and Founder's Day on March 29. Theme for the festivities will be "Celebrating the Past and Looking to the Future." **James W. Cochran**, native of Waynesboro, and charter member of Calvary Church will be guest speaker. He is a deacon at Temple Church and has taught a Sunday School Class for 30 years. Doug Broome is pastor.



Cochran

The adult choir of **Bayou View Church, Gulfport**, will present the Easter musical "All Hail King Jesus," a resurrection celebration, April 5 at 6 p.m.

C. Ferris Jordan will be honored with a reception, April 7 from 2-4 p.m., at New Orleans Seminary upon his retirement from the

NOBTS faculty. For more information, contact Donna Bowman at (501) 282-4455, ext. 3271, or by e-mail: pr@nobts.edu.



Women on Mission of First Church, Pascagoula, sponsored a churchwide North American Mission Board mission study on Feb. 18. Church members boarded the "Pascagoula Belle" and cruised down the Mississippi River to view Baptist work in the areas of poverty, World Changers, literacy, and Native Americans. The tour closed with Mark Twain singing "Ole Man River," followed by a pralines and iced tea reception. Over 300 people were in attendance. Rex Yančey is pastor.

Hebron Church, Smithdale, is hosting an appreciation day for its pastor J. Millard Purl and his wife on March 29. Purl has served in the ministry for 50 years, twenty of those years as pastor of Hebron Church. Activities include worship services at 11 a.m., noon meal in fellowship hall, and a reception from 1:30-3 p.m. Call (601) 567-2755 for more information.

World Mission Conference will be held at Oral Church, Hattiesburg, March 22-25. Services will be held on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., and 7 p.m. Mon.-Wed. Missionaries will be speaking at each service.

Bala Chitto Church, Magnolia, will celebrate its 125th anniversary on May 31. The times are 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Other activities include a covered dish meal in fellowship hall at noon and special music. The guest speaker will be Leroy Stringfield of Mountain Home, Ark. Dave Hartson is pastor.

Center Terrace Church, Canton, will host Sollie Smith in a book signing for "65 Years In The Baptist Ministry," March 22, 3-5 p.m. Refreshments will be provided. Smith will also preach at the 6 p.m. service. For more information call (601) 859-4186.



The Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) of Mt. Vernon Church, Newton Association, conducted a "Women of the Bible" program at the church on Feb. 7. Portraying women of the Bible were (back row, from left) Ruby Williams as Anna, Debbie Pouncey as Mary, Cindy Williams as Dorcas, Glenda Darely as Rahab, Ernestine James as Martha, (front row, from left) Irene Jones-WMU president, Lucille McLendon as Jacobed, Sara Waters as Rebecca, Betty Jones as Elizabeth, and Doris Thomas as Ester. Steve Pouncey is pastor.

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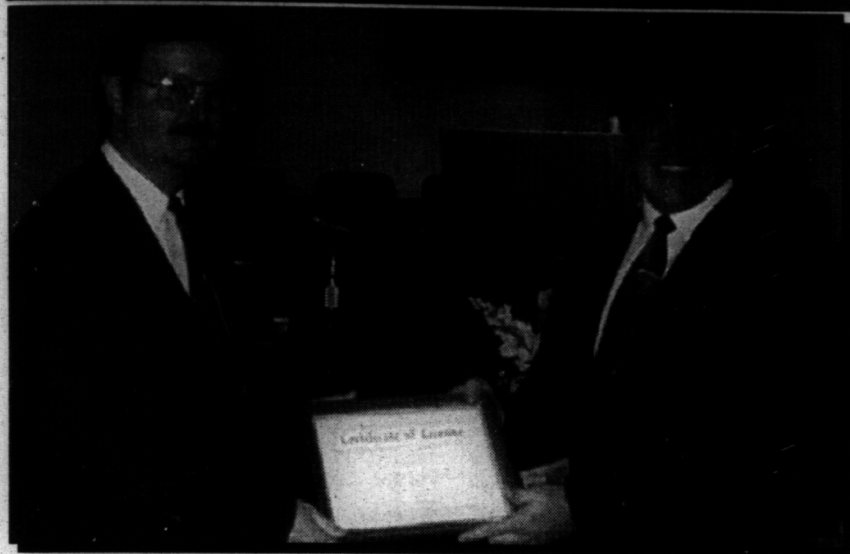
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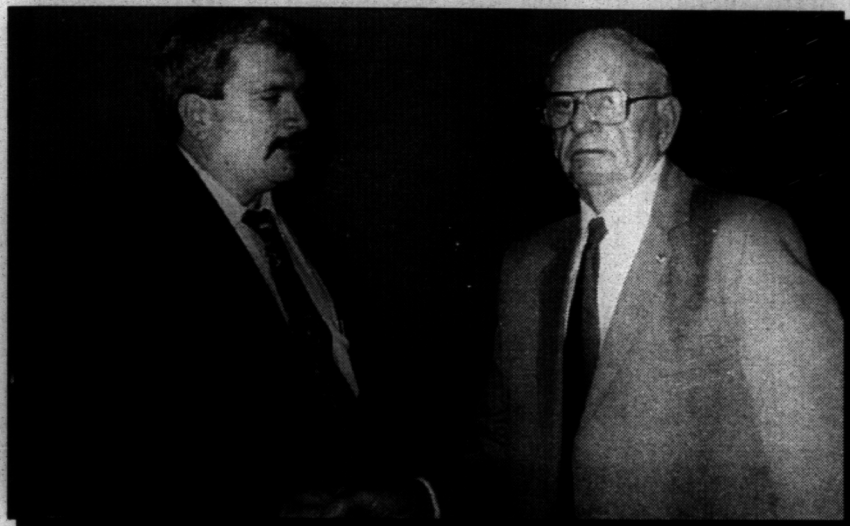
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NAMES IN THE NEWS



Arnie Westerfield was licensed to the ministry on Feb. 26 by Trinity Church, Pearl. He is available for pulpit supply. Pictured (from left) are Kenny Goff, pastor, and Westerfield.



Fredonia Church, New Albany, recently held deacon ordination services for Lanny Burchfield. He is pictured with his uncle Earl Burchfield (right), who has been a deacon of Fredonia Church for 36 years. Joe Herndon is pastor.

Keith Smith will be ordained to the gospel ministry on March 22 at Smyrna Church, Copiah Association, where he is currently serving as pastor. An ordination council led by John McBride, Copiah Association director of missions, and Smith's father-in-law Jerome McLendon, pastor of Unity Church, Simpson Association, will assemble at 2:30 p.m.. An ordination service and reception will follow.

Pamela Dyer, harpist, will perform at Bayou View Church, Gulfport, March 22, during the evening service at 6 p.m.



Michael and Jonathan Baker, sons of Becky and Bill Baker, pastor of West Ripley Church, Ripley, were each recently presented a \$500. Gerald C. Maurey Scholarship. The brothers are both students at Blue Mountain College (BMC). The scholarships were established in memory of Sgt. Gerald C. Maurey who was killed in Viet Nam and who had surrendered his life for full time Christian service prior to enlisting in the war. Maurey was the son of Juanita and T. C. Maurey, members of Concord Church, Booneville. The scholarships were presented at BMC recently by Robert E. Walker, pastor of Concord Church. Pictured (from left) are Hal Fisher, BMC president; Walker; Michael Baker; Jonathan Baker; Juanita Maurey; and T. C. Maurey.



Williamsville Church, Attala Association, recently ordained Jamie Moore (second from left) to the gospel ministry. Moore is currently serving as pastor of West Church, Holmes Association. Pictured with Moore are (from left) Stanley Ellis, deacon chairman at West Church; Jamie Moore, Allen Simpson, pastor, Williamsville Church; and Davis Thompson, deacon chairman at Williamsville Church.

STAFF CHANGES

W. Franklin Lay has been called as pastor of Springfield Church, Scott Association. For 13 years, the Lays were Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries to Costa Rica, where he pastored International Baptist Church. Lay and his wife Margaret also taught at the Costa Rica Theological Seminary and were involved in church planting.

REVIVAL DATES

New Zion, Crystal Springs: March 20-22; services, Friday and Saturday, 7 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Norris Curry, Natchez, evangelist; Pat Bufkin, interim pastor.

6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; John Foles, Maben, evangelist; Sandra Williams, Blythe Creek Church, music; Danny Irvin, pastor.

Blythe Creek, Mathiston: March 22-25; Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch in fellowship hall, and

Calvary, Durant: March 22-25; Sunday, 11 a.m.; Sun.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Willie Bishop, pastor will bring messages; Gary and Gale Sheppard, music.

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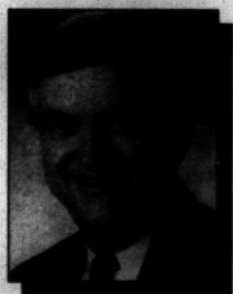
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

SEEKING STAFFER INFO

Editor:

Van Winkle Baptist Church will be celebrating 60 years of ministry on May 16-17. There are certain former staff members whom we have not been able to locate. If anyone has information on any of the following names, please call our church office at (601) 922-3513:

Bill Lowe, John Gilbert, Frank Lawton, Eddie Hebert, Glen Parker, Janice Chambers Hughes, Meredith Fox, and Clay Moss.

Also, we are in need of a picture of our first pastor, E. J. Blackford. He served at Van Winkle from 1938 until 1940 and is now deceased.

Please let us know if anyone has information regarding his family and how we may obtain a picture of him.

Melissa B. Lewis
Jackson

SIMPLE COMMENTARIES

Editor:

I read with interest Michael Packard's letter in the issue of February 26. He made a point that I had not thought of seriously.

My thought when I read Carl White's January 1, 1998, article was that the six works he referred to are simply commentaries on the Bible written by leaders we recognize.

I need all the help I can get in understanding my Bible.

Bruce M. Jones
Columbus

HISTORY HELP NEEDED

Editor:

Bethel Baptist Church, Oxberry, will be having their 125th anniversary on Memorial Day, May 24, 1998. Services will begin at 11 a.m. We are trying to compile a history book of the church. If you have any information you would like to put in this book such as old photos and things that happened that were funny, sad, etc., please send that information to Susan Mansfield, 1069 Hwy 35 North, Holcomb, MS 38940. All photos

will be duplicated and returned.

The anniversary activities will begin at 2 p.m. on Sunday. If you are a former pastor, teacher, music director, piano player, etc., and would like to participate in the anniversary celebration, please contact Rev. William McDaniel, 465 Country Lane, Holcomb, MS 38940, or call (601) 226-3693.

Also at Bethel Church on March 29 at 2-4 p.m., the family of Rev. and Mrs. W. B. McDaniel request your presence at the celebration of their 50th wedding anniversary.

Susan Mansfield
Holcomb

TRUST — THE TRUE ISSUE

Editor:

I believe Mississippi Baptists had a large part in helping change the direction of the SBC.

We did that by attending the SBC, listening to those who aspired to lead us, choosing between those who preached different philosophies, and voting the convictions of our hearts.

No real change was needed in Mississippi, yet leaders who felt threatened by the conservative movement in the SBC led us to make great changes — changes that affect basic concepts of truth and right.

There has been a lack of adequate, honest, and open debate over the real issues, and disregard and violation of our rules in doing our business.

Also, trust — the true issue between the trustees of

HOMEcomings

Plainway, Laurel: April 5; services, 11 a.m.; covered dish, noon, in fellowship hall; Jim Bryant, guest speaker; Randy McLeod, special music; Kent Megehee, pastor.

Trinity, Pearl: March 29; 11 a.m.; covered dish in fellowship hall; special music; Larry Russell, guest speaker; Kenny Goff, pastor.

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Mississippi College (MC) and the convention — was abandoned in order to keep the college in our convention.

We should all be ashamed that we allowed MC trustees to blackmail the convention into breaking the rules — a violation of the law.

It's not too late to do what is right — all that is needed is that we vote "no" to proposed constitutional changes and instruct our leaders to abide by the law, no matter the cost.

Ask yourself, why should this great convention give its name, its principles, and its money to trustees of institutions without holding them accountable to direct those institutions according to convention beliefs and principles?

Why should we give up the right to replace any and all trustees who do not explicitly carry out as a matter of trust the wishes of this convention?

Bobby T. Hood
Richton

THANKS FOR ASSISTANCE

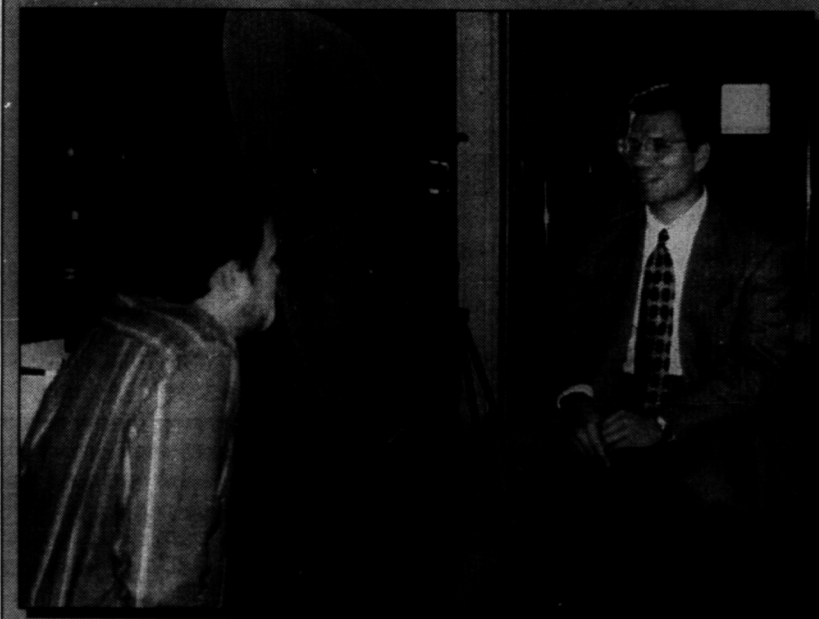
Editor:

A couple of months ago, we requested help in locating the 1975 edition of The Baptist Hymnal. We did so with the help of The Baptist Record to see if there were any churches who might have some they no longer needed. The response has just been overwhelming! We have received calls from Colorado to South Carolina from churches who have offered to donate these hymnals to us, and we were able to locate what we needed.

We would just like to take this opportunity to thank The Baptist Record for their help and to all those who have taken the time to call us long distance to help in our effort. It is so refreshing to see that God's people are there in time of need and to go out of their way to help.

Charles Stephenson, pastor
Ridgecrest Church
Corinth

Last-minute instructions



Tim Nicholas (left), Director of Communications for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB), gives instructions to Jose Lopez, Spanish mission pastor in Forest, during a shooting session for the MBCB video magazine Vessels. A new issue of Vessels will be released in May. (Photo by Carl M. White)

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Volunteers needed for China project

RICHMOND (BP) — Fifty English teachers are needed this summer to teach middle school instructors throughout China. The eight-week program is sponsored by the Volunteers in Missions department of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board (IMB).

"IMB will be cooperating with a highly experienced and reputable English-as-a-Second-Language organization in deploying capable teachers throughout China," said Bob McEachern, IMB associate director for the Asia and Pacific volunteer section.

Interested persons should call the International Mission Board at (800) 999-3113, then press eight when prompted.



Ron Mumbower, Ph.D.
Minister of Counseling
First Church, Jackson

LifeAnswers

Gambling broke up our home many years ago. My adult daughter recently got her employer to relocate a company conference planned for a casino. I am very proud of her. People can come out of a bad experience and make a difference.

What a wonderful testimony! Isn't it great that beauty can be born of such pain, and that new growth can spring from the ashes of devastation? The area around the Mount St. Helens volcano eruption was completely devastated, but is now some of the most fertile land in the world. Likewise, what we believe to be the most devastating circumstances of our lives

often turn into growth experiences. We don't like pain, but it can help strengthen us into the men and women God wants us to be. If only we will take the risk and make a stand....

I read about the mother who had enough of her son's disobedience and fired off a shot at him in his school. I can relate, so which would be more effective: my semiautomatic or my fully automatic firearm?

I begin with the assumption you are joking, but as a parent I can understand there are times when we wish we could get our children's attention. Obviously,

taking such extreme measures to accomplish that end is not appropriate. A better way is to establish consistent boundaries and set consequences for stepping over those boundaries. If your son neglects assigned responsibilities — say, taking out the trash — there should be easily recognized consequences, such as a loss of TV time, telephone privileges, automobile use, etc. React calmly and be creative in disciplining him for infractions. Lock up the guns, learn to be proactive, and let him know you love him unconditionally even when discipline is necessary.

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

William Carey College (WCC) was selected for an education partnership by Microsoft Corporation recently. The grant, valued at \$30,000, will significantly improve Carey's capabilities in the area of teacher education by allowing education majors access to the newest software programs. "The school of education has greatly expanded technology course offerings and opportunities for technology in methods and materials classes

over the past four years," said William Hetrick, dean of education and psychology. WCC was one of only three Mississippi institutions of higher learning chosen for this distinction.

Carey Dinner Theatre at William Carey College will hold open auditions for performers and conduct interviews for staff members on March 21. The procedure will begin at 10 a.m. in the O. L. Quave Theatre on campus. The only requirement for auditioning or applying for a staff position is high school graduation or its equivalent by May 26, the day rehearsals begin. Each member of the company, performers and staff, is paid. For additional information write to Carey Dinner Theatre, William Carey College, 498 Tuscan Avenue, Hattiesburg MS 39401-5499 or call (601) 582-6218.



Seventeen William Carey College students participated in a mission trip to the Cayman Islands recently. Members of the Chorale, the principal choral organization of the college, joined the First Baptist Church of Grand Cayman and Randy Von Kanel, pastor, who hosted the mission.

Students stayed in the homes of church members and sang in area churches and schools. The Chorale is under the direction of Milfred Valentine.

Members of the choir (pictured, front row, from left) are Stephanie Hanberry of Sumrall, Jennifer West of Laurel, Traci Woods of Columbus, Kelly Hennington of Petal, Melody Hanberry of Sumrall; (middle row) Wendy Brown of Laurel, Rita Wilson of Seminary, Alison Purvis of Petal, Amy Cline of Amory, Barbie Jones of Greenville, Tabitha Beard of Mobile, Ala.; (back row) Buddy Murphy of Hattiesburg, Alan Fleming of Stonewall, Marvin Miller of Poplarville, Scott Bourne of Hattiesburg, David Hennington of Petal, and Eric Smith of Lucedale.

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LIFE AND WORK

The cleansed leper: responding to God's help

Luke 17:11-19

By Jim Burnett

America is a country richly blessed by God Almighty, with her amber waves of grain, fruited plains, religious liberties, democracy, etc. But not everyone acknowledges God's goodness and grace even when these blessings are so generously spilled out on them.

Today's lesson warns us not to take the blessings of God for granted as did the nine lepers who were healed in the story before us.

On the contrary, there should be continuous praise and thanksgiving on the lips of Christians for the good that God brings to their lives

through Jesus Christ. Out of ten healed lepers only one returns to express his gratitude to Christ.

Ask for God's help (17:11-13). Leprosy was a serious and dreaded disease that manifested itself through a variety of skin disorders. It was not limited to the modern limitation of Hansen's disease.

But as always, Jesus looked passed the malady and into the hearts of these ten gentlemen. He was glad to relieve them of their physical pain and emotional isolation that accompanied leprosy.

Today, if you have ailments, crises, or troubles, Jesus is open



Burnett

for business. He will gladly come to your aid.

Do what God says (17:14). Interestingly, the moment the lepers responded to Jesus' instructions, they were healed. Their obedience led to physical restoration.

As God's children we must learn to do what our heavenly Father asks.

Obedience will not only keep us from making multiple mistakes, it will likewise bring wholeness to our spiritual, emotional, and possibly our physical beings.

Show your gratitude (17:15-18). Jesus was puzzled by the lack of appreciation these nine healed lepers, presumably all Jews, expressed. But there was one man, a Samaritan, who was deeply grateful to Christ for his miraculous healing.

In Jesus' day there was a major rift between the Samaritans who were considered half-breeds, second rate

citizens, and the Jews, the pure race, who prided themselves in being called God's chosen people. Yet in this story, it's the Jews who are oblivious to God's grace and Jesus' compassion.

What was the difference in the nine men and the one man? They each had the same healing experience but responded totally opposite.

I believe it was a character issue. As someone has said: "Gratitude is the sign of noble souls." Are God's people today guilty of a spirit of ingratitude?

In our welfare society have we grown accustomed to expecting God's blessings without any afterthought of thanking him for them?

If this be true, we too have a character problem. Let's not forget to thank our God for his goodness, mercy, and compassion shown to us daily. For a thankful heart is a heart Jesus can and will use for his glory.

Continue in faith (17:19). The Greek of verse 19 seems to

imply that the grateful leper was healed not only physically but also spiritually. The word *sozo* carries the meaning "to save, protect, heal, preserve, and to be whole."

When Christ comes into our lives, he's not interested in making a few physical adjustments. In fact, he desires to totally transform one's life and bring a divine wholeness. And when this metamorphosis takes place, we can never act or be the same.

On the contrary, the old nature is dethroned and the new nature emerges. Jesus expects this man now to live by his new-found faith and continue in that faith.

He expects the same from us. Oh yes, we can run to the Lord in times of crisis and he will come to our aid. But if we remain dependent on him daily we don't have to do much running. He is near.

Burnett is pastor of Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

The resurrection and the life

John 11:21-27, 33-35, 39, 43-44

By Harold W. Simmons

Before a feature movie on television, we are usually allowed to see some scenes that will follow during the movie. A preview is to whet our appetite for more of the movie. In the featured section of the scripture for this week, we are allowed to preview the resurrection of Jesus.

Continuing faith (11:21-22). We are allowed to hear a conversation from the first century that most pastors hear when they minister to grieving families. "If you had been here," sounds very much like "If I had only."

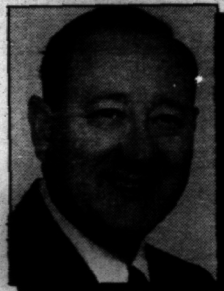
In the grieving process, very often, people try to place blame for the death of a loved one or

friend. I believe that is what was communicated here.

Then, in the same breath, Martha showed her faith in Jesus. She demonstrated the ambivalence of a grieving person, but Martha confessed to Jesus that she knew whatever Jesus asked, the Father would do.

It should be noted that Martha does not ask for any specific ministry from Jesus. She does not ask for her brother back nor does she ask for the ministry of comfort to her family and friends. She continued to trust Jesus to know what to ask and that the Father will hear him.

Lord over life and death (11:23-27). Jesus made an unbeliev-



Simmons

able statement to Martha that her brother would rise again.

Martha heard and responded out of her training that her brother would have a resurrection in the last day. Martha did not hear the immediacy of Jesus statement.

Jesus used the present tense when he said, "I am the resurrection and the life." The action of the verb is immediate and continuing as though he had said "I am now and will continue to be the resurrection and the life." The statement is reflective to the statement God made to Moses at the burning bush. God identified Himself as "I am."

Jesus could make this assertion because he is the Lord of life and resurrection and nothing can or will change that fact. Death will try to hold him but can not because he is Lord of life and death. Martha con-

fessed her belief that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah.

Feelings about death and bereavement (11:33-35). Through this section of scripture, we have another revelation of the tenderness of Jesus. Other places recorded his gentleness as he ministered to lepers, tax collectors, and other outcasts.

I believe Jesus was moved at the sorrow of his close friend, Mary. Her heart was broken at this point and Jesus experienced her hurt. He helped people to see that feeling and expressing sorrow was and is valid.

I don't believe Jesus had been overcome by the hopelessness that death often produces. He knew he was about to restore Lazarus to life. Some believe that Jesus wept because he knew the glory that Lazarus was experiencing and would soon be recalled from that glory to life.

Victory over death (11:39, 43-44). Martha reminds Jesus

that Lazarus had been dead for four days. This statement may also have been for the benefit of those who mourned with the sisters. They probably knew the commonly held belief that the spirit of the departed stayed around the body for three days in hope of reentering the body.

With the timing clear in the minds of all the mourners, Jesus commanded the dead to come to life and under his own power to come from the tomb. Jesus called in a loud voice for the benefit of those watching; he wanted to make sure that they knew Lazarus had not come from the grave by his own power but by the power of God. Jesus has the victory over death, even his own.

Jesus speaks to us. Through his action at the tomb of his friend, Jesus demonstrated that he is the victor over death and the giver of eternal life.

Simmons is pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada.

FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

Hopeful appeal

Mark 5:21-24

By Grace Graham

In a desperate circumstance where do you turn? Many times one does not know where to turn. Mark tells how a synagogue ruler turned to Jesus for help when his daughter lay dying thus emphasizing Jesus' power over disease and death.

A synagogue ruler was a very prominent person. His leadership was administrative not spiritual. This ruler, Jairus, fell at Jesus' feet and begged for the life of his daughter. He knew that Jesus could make her well.

The man did not seek the help of a physician. Even this ruler saw the power of God through Jesus. He publically turned to him in his desperation. How did Jesus respond?

He went with Jairus! Jesus will go with you when you turn to him in a difficult situation.

A "hopeless" situation (5:35-36). There was a great crowd. This group was pressing Jesus on every side. It would have been difficult for him to hurry away to the girl. Before he could get through the crowd, some of Jairus' household came to report that the little girl had died. One suggested that Jesus, "the teacher," not be bothered any more. After all, the opportunity for healing had passed.

But human despair was God's opportunity. Jesus had shown himself as the Lord of nature. He would now show himself as the master of death and the grave.



Graham

This would also serve as a preview of his resurrection. Jesus' resurrection is a central fact of all Christian experience.

Jesus turned to Jairus and told him not to be afraid but only to believe. The one condition of God's work in us is that we trust him!

Faith is not an intellectual fact. It is trust, dependent love, and obedience to God. This is an expression of our helplessness as well as an expression of God's power.

How can any situation be hopeless when Jesus says "don't be afraid, only believe?"

A hope fulfilled (5:37-43). Most of the crowd was sent away. Jesus only allowed Peter, James, and John (James' brother) to come and witness the events.

I'm sure that many people were sad over this girl's death but the people weeping and wailing were probably professional mourners. The more

prominent a person or family was, the more mourners were hired and the louder the wailing. Such an influential man as Jairus would have drawn many such professional mourners.

Jesus entered and asked those present what the fuss was about, the girl is just sleeping. The laughter that followed could make one wonder how much real grief and sorrow was present. Because of their response of unbelief, Jesus would not allow the crowd to witness the miracle about to take place. Only the three disciples and the child's parents would experience the power of Christ.

There were many laws in Jesus' time about ritual defilement. He had already stepped outside the law by touching a leper, a woman with a flow of blood, and now a dead body. His touch always brought about immediate cleansing.

Mark not only expressed the Aramaic command of Jesus, but interpreted it in Greek for

the sake of the Gentiles. "Little girl, I say to you arise."

Can you imagine the amazement and joy of the onlookers as the girl got up and walked? Just as he had commanded the leper, Jesus told the parents to tell no one of this event. The people who laughed and were sent out could draw their own conclusions when they saw the child alive.

Jesus further showed his compassion when he gave the command to give the girl something to eat. He had restored this family's hope for their future.

Could you have situations that seem as dark as the circumstance of this family? Our prayers are not always answered in the way that is expected. But they are always answered. In any circumstance God can provide hope, peace, and comfort. Let him provide renewed hope for your future.

Graham is Childhood Education Director at First Church, Gulfport.

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ASKA MVSWHX; GDX AW
XAEX HEST DOXR ASU,
XARD EVX UJ HRO, XR
TEJ AEZW S GWKRXXWO
XAWW.

AWGVWPH NSZW: NSZW

Clue: Z = V

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Romans Ten Nine.

Study slated for BWA's 21st century plans

WASHINGTON (BP) — Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), asked Baptist leaders to recommend their "brightest and best" for an ad hoc committee on BWA's direction at the start of the 21st century.

Lotz spoke during the BWA executive committee meeting, March 2-5 in Washington. As he looked around the room of Baptist leaders from every continent, Lotz voiced a measure of satisfaction with the international makeup he saw but said he still believes the BWA must become more representative of the world.

"From an all-white men's club, we have become more international and reflect that," Lotz said to the executive committee, "but the BWA must become more than an extended NATO alliance. We must truly be international and find ways of engaging leaders from all six continents in the deliberations as to the future mission of the church and the BWA's role in fulfilling that mission."

Whatever structural changes the BWA goes through, its role as "a catalyst for change" in Baptist life will stay the same, Lotz stated.

In an editorial in BWA News, the monthly newsletter sent to 191 member bodies — which Lotz said received "widespread reaction" — the BWA leader called for, among various areas of exploration, a: radical reformation; re-examination of where the Baptist movement is heading; new look at denominational structures; concern for new leadership; search for unity beyond theological divisions; and recommitment to the spiritual dimension of life that leaders will need if they are indeed to lead in the next century.

Lotz reported leaders of BWA regional work in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean,

Europe, and Latin America met with the BWA staff directors for their annual retreat in January and agreed the BWA must continue, among other things, to be:

- a catalyst for mission and evangelism;
- an advocate for religious freedom and human rights;
- a place for unity and togetherness, collaboration and cooperation;
- a movement for reconciliation;
- a place to promote Baptist identity;

- a worldwide forum for ideas;
- a place "to express an authentic and global Baptist view on ideas" and, where possible, give credibility to Baptists wherever they are and whatever their size; and
- a place "to entrust, empower, encourage, enable and help Baptists participate in ministry and service and provide fellowship that goes beyond the superficial to a depth of Christian caring and commitment to each other."

Sierra Leone Baptist leader flees home

WASHINGTON (BP) — Moses Khanu, general secretary of the Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone, and his family fled their home in Lunsar in mid-February when soldiers of the Armed Revolutionary Council (the junta) and rebels who support them turned on people in their path and looted their houses.

"They lost everything but their lives," said K.S. Kamara, president of the convention, in a call to the Baptist World Alliance.

The Nigerian-led West African military intervention force ECOMOG toppled the government of junta leader Johnny Paul Koroma Feb. 12-13 and captured the capital, Freetown.

"However, ECOMOG troops are not in control everywhere and this has left Sierra Leoneans vulnerable to revenge attacks by fleeing junta troops and other rebels," Kamara said.

Koroma, who overthrew elected President Ahmed Tejan Kabbah last year, has escaped, and while many rebel fighters and junta soldiers were disarmed by ECOMOG troops, many others were able

to run away with their arms and go back to the bush.

The fighters went to the mission compound of the convention, "entered all the houses, took away the furniture and stole their cars," Kamara said.

The Khanu family had to walk 20 miles to another small town for refuge. As of Feb. 20, Kamara said, Khanu's two sons were reported to be in another village and he was hoping to be reunited with them soon.

"It seems as if almost all the people from these smaller towns where there are no ECOMOG troops are scattered and have run away into the bush or are trying to cross the borders of Guinea," Kamara said.

Mostly civilians were killed during the fighting that saw ECOMOG take control of the military, but Freetown is now quiet.

No Southern Baptist International Mission Board missionaries currently are stationed in the country.

Kamara asked Baptist World Aid (BWAid) for more help, especially for food. Already BWAid has sent \$15,000 to Sierra Leone Baptists to help with food.

BWA executive committee hears meeting plans

WASHINGTON (BP) — Plans for three key Baptist World Alliance (BWA) meetings were presented to the BWA executive committee during its March 2-5 meeting in Washington.

The 18th Baptist World Congress will help usher in the new millennium, Jan. 5-9, 2000, in Melbourne, Australia, with the theme, "Jesus Christ Forever. Yes!"

A Baptist International Summit on Racism and Ethnic Conflict is planned for Jan. 8-11, 1999, at the Ebenezer Baptist Church, Atlanta. Evangelist Billy Graham and Coretta Scott King, wife of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., are being invited to serve as honorary co-chairs of the summit, said Denton Lotz, BWA general secretary.

The 13th Baptist Youth Conference, also held every five years, will be July 22-26 of this year in Houston, with the theme, "Now Is The Time!"

The BWA Congress, in Melbourne's new Exhibition Center alongside the Yarra River, will give an opportunity for fellowship among Baptists from more than 200 countries, as well as with brothers and sisters from

across Australia, said Douglas Inglis, BWA Congress director.

Speakers currently are being confirmed to challenge the global Baptist community in the areas of evangelism, worship, social action, and radical discipleship. Worship experiences will include drama, choirs and musicians from around the world.

Special sessions, including a track for pastors, will encompass a wide variety of topics to nurture both personal and church growth, as well as hands-on missions experiences in the Melbourne area.

A multiethnic outdoor rally will be led by BWA President Nilson Fanini of Brazil, along with an indoor evangelistic meeting to fuel Baptist efforts to proclaim the gospel throughout the world.

Information on the congress is available from the Baptist World Alliance, 6733 Curran Street, McLean, VA 22101-6005; phone, (703) 790-8980; fax, (703) 893-5160; e-mail: Congress@bwanet.org.

Lotz also announced that a member of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been invited to speak to the BWA Human Rights Commission when the BWA general council meets in Durban, South Africa, in July.

In other reports during the

March BWA executive committee's meeting included:

■ Mercy Jeyaraja Rao, president of the BWA women's department, announced the group is beginning its search process for a new executive director.

■ Harold C. Bennett, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and chair of the BWA constitution and bylaw review committee, reported current leaders of the men's and women's departments have been invited to meet with both the constitution and personnel committees to review structures and other matters.

■ Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid, reported \$4.5 million in aid was distributed around the world in 1997 through BWA channels.

■ Inglis, who also is BWA's director of promotion and development, reported that part of BWA's strategy to ensure its future will be the establishment of a foundation of at least \$10 million. This will give the BWA, which currently operates on a budget of a little more than \$5.5 million, another \$1 million with which to do its worldwide ministries.

Celebrating ministry anniversary



Three silver oak trees symbolizing past, present, and future ministries were planted during 25th anniversary festivities held in January for Bangalore Baptist Hospital in India. Jerry Rankin (second from left), president of the Southern Baptist International Mission Board, and his wife Bobbie (right) helped plant the trees in accordance with an Indian custom. The Silver Jubilee celebration included the dedication of new housing for male students and staff and a program of health services offered to the community at greatly reduced prices. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)